

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Fish and Wildlife Service
300 Westgate Center Drive
Hadley, MA 01035-9589

Lake Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge (NWR)
Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP)
Public Hearing - August 1, 2007
Berlin, New Hampshire

Tom Goettel (Hearing Officer): Okay, welcome to the third public hearing for the Lake Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan. My name is Tom Goettel and I'll be the hearing officer for tonight. I work for the Fish and Wildlife Service. Our regional office is in Hadley, MA. My role is to facilitate the recording of your oral comments on the CCP. There is no presentation by the Service tonight other than what you saw earlier. Instead, this is your opportunity to give us your thoughts and ideas, and our opportunity to listen. We'll be recording your testimony tonight on video camera and on audio tape. The tape will be transcribed by a professional court reporter and posted on our web site in September. The transcriptions will become part of the CCP's Official Administrative Record. Your comments will be considered along with all written comments received. The Service's response to these comments will be in an appendix in the final plan. So, here's the process for the rest of the evening plus a few ground rules for everybody. I will call individuals to the podium in the order listed on the sign-in sheet. Now is the time to add your name to the list if you haven't done so already. After you are called up, the first thing you need to do is state your name and spell it out. So, you'll come up to the podium right here and for example, say, "my name is Tom Goettel, G-O-E-T-T-E-L. After spelling your name, you'll have four minutes to provide comments. You can read from prepared text or speak off the cuff. We really need to stick to the allotted time, so Mr. Edwards here will alert you with his flash cards when you have two minutes left, 30 seconds left, and when your time is over. And all that we ask is that you please be respectful of the timeline, so that we can get everybody's testimony. And, if time permits, and in the past two nights, time has permitted, we've had plenty of time, whoever wants to come up for another four minutes can come up. But what we want to do is get everybody who wants to speak one time, get everybody out of the way first, and then go to repeat speakers. We only ask that the second time you provide new or different comments from what you provided the first time. Only one person will have the floor at a time, so if you're not at the podium, we ask that you be respectful of whomever is speaking and remain silent. I want to reiterate our purpose tonight is to listen to and record your comments; so, we will not be answering any questions or responding to your comments in any way. However, if there is time afterwards, everybody will be available to answer your comments, set up the way they were before the official hearing started tonight. We will end the hearing after the last speaker or at 9:30 p.m. whichever comes first. Any questions on the ground rules at all? Anybody want any clarification or anything?

Speaker from the floor: Are we going to be able to ask questions sometimes?

Goettel: No. No you'll just give testimony tonight. If you want to ask questions, you can do so afterwards, after the hearing. And, there will also be another public meeting where you can ask questions on - refresh my memory Nancy, August 16th in Errol.... So, before I call the first speaker, I'd like to bring Nancy McGarigal back up, and she's got some remarks.

McGarigal: I'd like to thank you all for coming again. I think I said that the first time around. This is the third in a series of five public hearings about this draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan. As you know, we were in Errol on Monday, Newry last night, and here tonight. And, then we'll be in Augusta and Concord next week. You're welcome to attend the remaining meetings. We certainly welcome you to come and provide additional comments, or you can restate the comments that you're going to share here tonight. Either way, we encourage your attendance for those meetings as well. As the person who will end up synthesizing and summarizing the comments that come in, both what we hear tonight, and what comes in as written comments, I just have some recommendations on how you might submit those comments. I just want to reiterate - that, there was a comment last night that we're trying to dictate what people say; and I assure you, that is not it. I want to facilitate getting your comments read, and being able to respond to them. That's my job, and it would really facilitate things if your comments are what we call substantive; those are the ones we need to address. It is not all that helpful if your comments are just a list of questions. Because I am not always sure what it is that concerns you when it's a question. That's why we made ourselves available earlier tonight, to answer your questions, so that your comments that do come in are substantive. We need to know the core of what are your concerns so that we can address them directly. Um... again, the purpose of tonight is to hear from you about comments you have on the Draft Plan. We recognize that there are some concerns out there with - there is some private personal concerns with what Paul, the Refuge Manager, is doing as a private citizen. Tonight is not the appropriate venue to express those concerns; I guess I'd like to say tonight there are other venues - if you're still interested in pursuing that, by all means; but tonight is not the venue to address those. I'm not the person you need to be talking to about those concerns. I want to hear about what you have to say about the Draft Plan. Um... it's also best that when you state your comments - that you elaborate on your opinion. To just state that, "I think you should allow horseback riding" is not that helpful. It would be nice to hear from you, the "why" you think it is important on these refuge lands. You might say that these trails provided on the Refuge are near and dear and the only ones that are available to you - that you have no other opportunity - that sort of thing. To elaborate on your opinion would be most helpful to me as I try to address or record what your concerns are. As Paul mentioned, we would be interested in knowing if you have found factual errors or if there is need for clarification in the plan. You pointed out today that there is something's wrong with the maps, or you want a clarification of the map. I'd like to get that feedback. So that when you view the final plan you can understand fully the proposal. As Tom Goettel indicated, we're taking these comments, the oral and the written comments, and summarizing them and publishing

them in an appendix to the final plan. We will indicate in that appendix - you will see how we dealt with your comments. You'll see how we might have modified our proposals, might have modified our alternatives as a response, or where we might have provided additional rationale or clarified something or maybe some changes from the errors that you pointed out. So, we're attempting to be very straightforward in how we deal with your comments. We'll be putting this in an appendix, you should be looking for that appendix in the final plan. As a reminder, the decision-maker in this process is Marvin Moriarty, he is the Regional Director based out of the Hadley, MA office. Finally, we are announcing two changes to the schedule we published from what you might have received in a newsletter. We have extended the public comment period to September 21st. We heard it loud and clear at an Errol Information Session we had a few weeks back that there simply wasn't enough time for people to digest the document, so we are offering another 30 days to receive comments. Um... so please keep in mind that even if you speak here tonight, you still have until September 21st to submit anything in writing. You may have additional thoughts that you may want to elaborate on what you said tonight or on something another speaker said tonight. And, that's all fine. The other thing is, based on Monday's meeting in Errol, we did not have the same format where Paul gave you the refuge information/presentation; we decided to offer another question and answer session in Errol. It will be at the Town Hall on Thursday, August 16th. We'll be sending out postcards. Most of you may have already gotten one by now that announced the comment period extension. We'll be sending out another postcard to everybody that signed in tonight, that has been on our mailing list, or that attended these meetings. We encourage you to come to the Town Hall. It will be more of a question and answer session for you to get your questions answered so that you can provide us with substantive comments. (inaudible) (multiple speakers in background) I'm sorry - I forgot to introduce Paul Casey, Refuge Manager, and Ian Drew, Deputy Refuge Manager.

Goettel: Okay, questions on any procedures tonight? What we're want to do, what we're going to get accomplished. On testimony ... any questions at all?

Speaker: I'd like to mention a couple of handouts that I would like to pass out to members that are not controversial, when I speak.

McGarigal: Okay. Are you talking about handing them to us or to the audience?

Speaker: To you guys and also to the camera. Just some submittals.

McGarigal: Oh okay.

Goettel: I thought you meant to the audience.

Speaker: Oh, no. No. Just to you guys so you would have it as part of your record.

MGarigal: Can you read this from there?

Goettel: Okay, any other questions before we get started? Okay, the first speaker is Dan Roberge.

Roberge: My name is Dan Roberge, R-O-B-E-R-G-E. And, I wish you hadn't shut the windows, as I had hired that van to help my presentation along. (laughter). When the Lake Umbagog Wildlife Refuge was formed in 1992, there were valid concerns about the changing economies of the timber industry and other owners of large tracts of land in the vicinity of the lake. There were real fears that these large tracts of land would be sold, and the possibility of major subdivisions and unchecked development, similar to the waterfront sprawl that has taken place on Lake Winnepesaukee and just about every other lake in the state, would occur. The impact on wildlife of the area could have been devastating. The formation of the Refuge has insured that this wildlife habitat will now be protected forever. The feared potential development cannot occur, and I think that this is a very good thing. Unfortunately, many decisions that have been made since the formation of the Refuge have left much to be desired. To list a few: the location of the Refuge headquarters on Route 16 in Wentworth Location, 6 miles up in the Magalloway River, instead of the lake, and this is an issue which they are now trying to address. Why wasn't it done in the first place? I also wonder about the time and money spent on the construction of wildlife viewing areas, similar to the one about two miles up from the wildlife refuge. I have never seen anyone there. I have been there, to the viewing area, and once saw a duck. It was so far away that I couldn't take a decent picture of it with a 450 mm lens. And lastly, as far examples, the ahh...I am concerned about the disinformation that refuge employees have spread to discourage potential private land and camp sales, or to intimidate new camp owners. And, I could list a list of those. Having had a chance to read the summary reviews since attending the Errol meeting on Monday, I was very discouraged by the content. And, I see a lot of potential "oops" associated with all three alternatives. For this reason, I am presenting a proposed Alternative D, and it doesn't stand for Dan, it just happens to be the next letter available. Leave the refuge at its present size with the option of buying lands within the original scope of the refuge. Relocate all refuge personnel to any of the other 545 refuge locations, and let Mother Nature have an opportunity to take care of her own. The Service has done many studies of the present status of the refuge. I propose coming back in 14 years and study the changes that will have occurred in that time, letting Mother Nature doing whatever it does. Then compare the results with the 545 other refuge locations where the Federal government knows better than Mother Nature; then you can create a baseline as to who has done a better job. My money is on Mother Nature. Thank you. (Applause)

Goettel: Thank you. Our next speaker is Robert T. Folsom Sr.

Folsom: You didn't ask us to spell our name, but I will anyway. Robert T. Folsom F-O-L-S-O-M. Just a quick couple of things. We addressed the horseback riding; Nancy mentioned that we should give a reason. Ahh, so what I would like to do is give that reason. I think the founder of the refuges in all of the United States, as probably most of you know was Theodore Roosevelt. Back in 1898, July 1, 1898, on the San Juan Hill in Cuba, he presented a charge on horseback, I might add, and later received posthumously the Medal of Honor through President Clinton and it was decorated to his great grandson Tweed Roosevelt. So, I think that's a good reason why we ought to allow

horseback riding, as well as the fact that horses don't leave any more of a mess, or cause any more damage than our moose do. And we certainly are not going to get rid of them, unless you plan to eliminate those, I don't know. (Applause) *(Mr Folsom came forward, away from the microphone, with several historical photos of Teddy Roosevelt)* (laughter)... He was also one of the Rough Riders. He gave people that are here tonight their jobs, so I think we ought to honor him by allowing it especially if it will help out my neighbor who loves to horseback ride. I also might add that he was one of the best hunters in the country, and so therefore, I don't think we ought to regulate the hunting at all. So at any rate, I just wanted to make that point on horseback riding. I think it is a disgrace to eliminate that from something that he dearly loved and he was certainly..had a forethought to start the refuges and make this protection of the properties, which we all really love and want. So thanks, I've got two minutes, so I'll make this last couple of quotes from Theodore Roosevelt. *This country will not be a permanently good place for us to live in unless we make it a reasonable good place for all of us to live.* He made that speech in Chicago, IL in 1912. And then also, I think that means that we have to enjoy this place to live too. And you guys have to recognize that you need to make it happen for us as well. And all of the different things that we like to do in the refuge, snowmobiling and so forth, you need to promote that, so everybody's happy here. You don't want a whole bunch of Northland people unhappy. *No man can lead the public career really worth leading; no man can act without rugged independence in serious crisis, nor strike at great abuses, nor afford to make powerful and unscrupulous foes, if he himself is vulnerable in his private career. No man is above the law and no man is below it; nor do we ask any man's permission when we require him to obey it. Obedience in the law is demanded as a right, not asked as a favor.* So I feel that, what we need to do, is all the refuge personnel have to operate in a legal way and not try to cause people not to subdivide their land just for the sake of furthering the refuge, as well as any other things that some of the public want to do such as marinas that are certainly being curtailed by 20 page letters from your Solicitors, and also pressure from that refuge personnel. Thank you very much. (Applause)

Goettel: The next speaker is Lisa Dell'Amico

Dell'Amico: My last name is Dell'Amico D-E-L-L' A-M-I-C-0 and I just wanted to clarify one point which is that, the only plan here would allow licensed trappers to trap on Lake Umbagog would be Plan B, is that correct?

Paul Casey: B and C

Dell'Amico: B and C. Okay. Plan C would also allow licensed trappers? Okay. I oppose Plan B and C because it would allow regular fur trappers to trap during all regular open seasons. Fur trappers sell pelts for their own profit; not the refuges', and they should not be allowed to come into a wildlife refuge and trap animals for personal profit. That's not why wildlife refuge systems were established. In fact, when a national wildlife refuge system was first established, hunting and trapping were prohibited. After all, hunting and trapping on wildlife refuges is a bit of an oxymoron, don't you think? The definition of a refuge is "shelter or protection from danger or distress". How can the

barbaric trapping of animals be consistent with the wildlife refuge? The Lake Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge was established “to provide long term protection for unique wetlands and threatened and endangered species”. And, yet trapping poses a serious hazard to non-target wildlife, including endangered species such as the pine marten, the lynx and the bald eagle and bobcats and New England cottontails, which are listed as species of special concern. A quote from the Wildlife Action Plan, page A-256, states that *fisher trappers incidentally trap martens in fisher sets, sometimes killing them*. How can you have a mission to protect threatened and endangered species while allowing leg hold traps that kill them? Again, another oxymoron. Your conservation plan states that *trapping serves to provide a natural resource based activity that is steeped in this area’s history and cultural traditions*. There too was a recreational activity in the South that was also steeped in Southern history and cultural traditions. That recreation was dog fighting, which is now illegal in every state in the U.S., and a felony offense in almost every state. As far as blatant animal cruelty goes, Southern states are now more advanced than New Hampshire. As they were willing to let go of a cultural tradition that caused unnecessary suffering to animals. Trapping is banned in California, Florida, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Massachusetts, and Washington, and in 88 countries around the world. As we continue evolve as human beings, we will see more states added to the list, one at a time, just like it happened with dog fighting. This is not a time to move backwards and introduce trapping to Lake Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge. As a state agency, I hope you will begin to take into account the will of the majority of people who live in New Hampshire, rather than to protect a declining number of trappers who represent less than 6% of New Hampshire’s population. Otherwise, the majority of New Hampshire residents will continue to not support your agency. For these reasons, I recommend Plan A which does not allow regular trapping. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to express my concerns over Plan B and Plan C. Thank you. (Applause)

Goettel: Thank you. Would anybody else - I know there’s probably a few people in the audience that would like to get up. This is your chance. Come up.

Hopkins: My name is Ray Hopkins H-O-P-K-I-N-S. I’m relatively new to the area. I moved here in 2003. I am not really familiar with the planning on Umbagog, but my observations since moving into this area is, I think the logging industry is being overdone. I would like to see you get the most land that is possible for the Federal government to manage. Not necessarily because I like the Forest and Fish and Wildlife’s management of the lands, mainly for the prospect so it won’t be developed or destroyed privately. They are not making any more. Until Coos County, and I’m not familiar with Maine, can get its act together as to where it wants to go in economic development, and the industries that it would like to attract to this area - right now it’s a conflict between biomass plants and recreation and tourism. But until those issues have been decided, I’d like to keep the maximum amount of land available for public use to our children and their children in the future. Thank you. (Applause)

Goettel: Thank you very much. Would anybody else like to come up?

Boisselle: My name is Leo Boisselle from Berlin here.

Goettel: Spell your last name.

Boisselle: B-O-I-S-S-E-L-L-E. And is it a fact, sir, that in the refuge you can't use lead for anything? Like hunting? Any refuge? Especially this one. And just one more thing too, is would you read us the rules and regulations of a refuge, or would you send us one?. Thank you.

Goettel: Sure, I can - we're not supposed to answer your questions, but I'd be glad to refer that to Paul or Nancy and we'd be glad to send you the Federal Regulations. That's not a problem.

Paul Casey: We will stay after over there after the hearing for people who would like to ask more questions.

Goettel: I noticed somebody else had their hand up too.

Roy: Good evening. My name is Lionel Roy, R-O-Y, as in Roy Rogers. And my concern is my secondary little weekend town of Upton. I'm just wondering what is going to happen to our tax base over there. As these properties are being purchased, the land is being also purchased which, of course, I've got really I'm either way, it does not make that much difference to me, but it certainly makes a difference to our coffers in Upton. And, I don't know what is going to happen - what's happening to the tax base. In lieu of taxes, I know that we get some funds from the government. But, what I'm a little bit concerned is how sure are these, in lieu of taxes, payments. And I understand that already Upton is in a negative position as far as tax base against in lieu of taxes from the government. So, we plan, I suppose were a little town of 60 people roughly, so as we lose 8 or 10 properties, or even 20 in the future here, I don't know what will happen to taking care of the roads and taking care of the liability of the town such as schools. We have children in school, and you know what the cost of schools are, and certainly we hope that we're going to keep on making children; not me, but somebody will (laughter). So, that really is my primary concern. I'm - I don't know what in lieu of taxes really means to the Federal government, and how long it will last, and I think that if the town - it could put the town in bankruptcy I think, if enough of these properties and land are sold. Thank you. (Applause)

Goettel: Would anybody else like to speak? I know a lot of people don't like to get up and speak in public, but this is your chance. I'd like to encourage you to get up - if you'd like to get up.

Demers: My name is Norman Demers D-E-M-E-R-S. I'd like to know how much land you have already here in the process. Why do you try to cram some more out of our livelihood? We have to pay our taxes, but you're taking the benefit away. We have to eek every bit, every penny, we make out of our salary. We're retired; we don't have no bundle like these people can do. They need money, tell Uncle Sam we need some more.

We can't print it. Maybe they can. I don't know how these people can sleep at night. (Applause)

Goettel: Thank you. Would anybody else like to get up? Again, I would encourage you if you don't want to get up and speak tonight, to submit written comments as we talked about. That's it.

Brown: I don't want to start my two minutes until I get my stuff out here. My name is Karen Brown, K-A-R-E-N B-R-O-W-N. The original intent, as I and my mother understood, the National Wildlife Refuge was we wanted to curtail development along the shores of Lake Umbagog and we wanted restrictions on development and so because it was going to be expensive and the Federal government has deep pockets, we thought this was how to begin. We wanted restriction on development, but I think what we're getting are restrictions on historic uses that are starting to pinch. And, there has been some talk about a Working Group. Um... and I would, I think that might be a good idea, but I think what has been missing for all of us here, whichever side of the podium you're on, whichever side of the issues you're on, is that we don't have the public standing to have input into the plan that would stick. Whether it's for or against trapping, for or against snowmobiling, it's - as Nancy said last night, it's been an interagency effort. And there hasn't been - when you're all talking to each other, you miss our input, and some examples of this are: for instance, changing the name of the refuge. I don't think anybody quite understands the impact of that. Just from the standpoint of...the Department of Interior puts out these maps, and in the very middle of this it says "the Lake Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge." It's written on here seven times and there are several other portions that are on this. The expense and the confusion of changing the name of the refuge after how many years - I sometimes wonder where the budget is. The gentleman before me mentioned how much money this is all costing. It's coming out of our pockets. I'm self employed and I have - I spend at least \$2,000 every time I have to change my business cards, my stationary. So, I would recommend you take another look at that. There have been some comments about restricting sled dogging and horseback riding within the refuge. Now I went back, this is a map from 1964. Actually, it shows a lot of the roads, and it shows up to Brown Company Camp #2, and then it shows hiking trails that existed. And one of the things that it says on the unimproved roads, is that they are "designed for foot, jeep and horse travel." Now when my great grandfather came up here, he took the train to Berlin, I believe, and maybe it was Milan, and went by horse and buggy up to our camp. The operative word being horse. And when we logged up here years ago, we used horses to get the logs out of the woods. So, I think horseback riding could be seen to be an historic use, and therefore compatible, within the refuge. I'm guessing I'm going to be able to find something on sled dogging somewhere; I just didn't have time to look. So, I would say that a working group that included some of us, from whichever side, might be helpful in this planning process. And, I honestly think "A", until we can go forward with some public and private partnerships to try to resolve some of things instead of having confrontations and ill feelings in all of our communities. Thank you. (Applause)

Goettel: Anybody else before we go onto round 2?

Folsom: F-O-L-S-O-M. Okay, I think that we covered a lot of ground tonight, so that's good and I appreciate the refuge personnel coming back with some comments on previous meeting which I've all attended. I still want Eddy's job, if he gives it up. At any rate, as far as the trapping is concerned, since I've had the place up here on Umbagog Lake some 20 odd years, when I came up you could ice fish on the lake. And, I'm not saying that's the refuge's fault, but now you can't ice fish past Pine Point. And, then also because of the increased use of the lake, and I'm not against people coming, but now all of a sudden, we've got smallmouth bass in the lake, and you can't trap on the lake lands. I did plan to trap when I was going to retire. I did take a course here in Norway, NH - not Norway - Conway, NH. And I've got all the material ready to go trapping in another year or two when I retire, but it looks like that may not happen. So I have to say something good about trapping. I remember the course, and it said that they did control overpopulation of animals, so I think that's a good thing. I mean you can get mange and a lot of other things that happen when you have over-population; they eat all the food. Right now the deer are eating everything in sight. In Upton...its nothing to see 20 or 30 deer out on the lake, down at the end of the lake. So, I think that trapping, as long as it's legal. I think it's not really a good thing to compare dog fighting with trapping. There is really no comparison. Trapping is a sport; if I do it, it is certainly not going to be for the money. You get very little money for your pelts from what I understand - \$10-\$20 at the most for coyote or something, and it helps to create a balance of nature so you eliminate a lot of the diseases. So I think I am for keeping the trapping. Thanks, Jim. But at any rate, I want to thank the refuge personnel for coming from Hadley, MA - Tom and Jim, and the rest of you refuge personnel, and thanks for giving us the opportunity to speak. And, I guess I'll see you in Augusta, or wherever it is the next one is. Thank you very much. (Applause)

Goettel: Would anybody else like to speak?

Eastman: Second round, first-comer. My name is Glen Eastman, E-A-S-T-M-A-N. I'm a resident of Gorham, NH and I'm a land owner on Umbagog Lake. My family has been there for some 70 years. We've watched it. We've seen the changes. And, I rise tonight in somewhat of an ambivalent position; I'm not terribly opposed to the expansion of the refuge, but I am specifically opposed to the inclusion of the Lake area within the parameters of the refuge. In other words, I don't like the name change; it has the potential in my judgment to change a lot of things in terms of control of the lake. I think it possibly usurps, unless they give up their sovereign rights, the state's rights under it. I've found having had some appreciable relationships with the Federal government over the years, that costs generally tend to rise when they expand something, and management and maintenance generally tends to diminish. I don't think that's the right parallel. So, if I believe the community could be assured that the regulations on the lake, such as no removal of motored boats, and that type of thing could be guaranteed, there might be a lot less opposition. I thank you for the opportunity of listening to a raspy old man and good night. (Applause)

Goettel: Thank you - anybody else? Going once, going twice. Okay this concludes our third public hearing. Thank you all for attending and your input. And let me advise you one more time, I encourage everybody to talk either talk to Paul, Nancy or Ian afterwards here to have your questions answered and to submit written comments at any time before September 21. If you didn't hear Nancy, there are comment forms on the table for you to use if you want. Again, thank you very much.

END OF TAPE

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Action Business Services
15 Benton Drive
East Longmeadow, MA 01028